

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2202

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USUN NEW YORK 0527

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRAGUE 0585

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SHUM CSCE CZ NL

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS FONMIN CHAMPIONS HUMAN RIGHTS IN PRAGUE

1. SUMMARY: PRAGUE VISIT FEB 28-MAR 2 OF FOREIGN

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MINISTER VAN DER STOEL WAS ROUTINE ON EVERYTHING BUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. ON THAT HIS QUIET BUT FIRM INSISTENCE THAT FOREIGN COMMENT ON VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT INTERFERENCE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET BRIEFLY WITH CHARTER 77 SPOKESMAN PATOCKA LED FINALLY TO CANCELLATION OF COURTESY CALLS ON PRESIDENT HUSAK AND ACTING PREMIER.

OVERALL TONE OF VISIT WAS DECIDEDLY COOL. END SUMMARY.

2. NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR MACLAINE PONT TOLD US THAT DUTCH WERE SURPRISED THAT GOC DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH VISIT THAT WAS BOUND TO STIR UP TENSIONS. (COMMENT: OUR OWN VIEW IS THAT FONMIN CHNOUPEK IS TRYING TO MAINTAIN HIS ACTIVIST FOREIGN POLICY TO PROVE - AT LEAST TO HIS OWN PEOPLE - THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS NOT AN INTERNATIONAL PARIAH. END COMMENT) MACLAINE PONT PROVIDED FOLLOWING DETAILS.

3. DURING ROUTINE TOUR D'HORIZON ON BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, CHNOUPEK REFERRED TO CHARTER 77 ISSUE AS AN "IMPERIALIST PLOT". VAN DER STOEL REPLIED THAT THIS ASSERTION WAS NONSENSE, ESPECIALLY WHEN SPEAKING TO THE REPRESENTATIVE OF A COUNTRY THAT OBVIOUSLY HAD NO DESIRE FOR AN INCH OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY'S TERRITORY. WESTERN PUBLIC INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HE SAID, REFLECTS ONLY A GENERAL INTEREST IN QUARANTEEING BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS EVERYWHERE -- AS EXPRESSED IN PRINCIPLE 7 OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. HE HAD NO PERSONAL INTEREST IN ANY OF THE CHARTER ACTIVISTS INDIVIDUALLY, BUT HIS COUNTRY NATURALLY SYMPATHIZED WITH PEOPLE WHO APPEAR ONLY TO BE ASKING THAT RIGHTS SPECIFIED IN THEIR COUNTRY'S CONSTITUTION BE HONORED. CHNOUPEK REPLIED THAT ARTICLE 28 OF THE CSSR CONSTITUTION REQUIRES FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION TO BE "CONSISTENT WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE" AND OTHER ARTICLES MAKE DEFENSE OF THE SOCIALIST ORDER THE SUPREME DUTY OF CITIZENS. VAN DER STOEL SAID THE TWO SIDES WERE OBVIOUSLY SPEAKING DIFFERENT LANGUAGES AND THAT

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THIS CAST A VERY DARK CLOUD OVER BELGRADE. CHNOUPEK THEN BACKED DOWN ON HIS IMPERIALIST PLOT CHARGE, BUT CAME DOWN HARD ON PRINCIPLE 6 (NONINTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS) OF THE FINAL ACT. VAN DER STOEL INSISTED THAT AT BELGRADE ALL OF THE FINAL ACT MUST BE DISCUSSED, NOT JUST THE PARTS ON NONINTERFERENCE THAT CHNOUPEK PREFERS.

4. FOLLOWING MARCH 1 MEETING WITH CHNOUPEK VANDER STOEL RETURNED TO HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL TO FIND CHARTER SPOKESMAN JAN PATOCKA AND DUTCH JOURNALISTS (INCLUDING TV TEAM) WAITING FOR HIM. IN A BRIEF MEETING, PATOCKA EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT CHARTER 77 ADHERENTS WERE NOT POLITICAL DISSIDENTS BUT SIMPLY WANTED THE REGIME TO HONOR ITS COMMITMENTS TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK CONSTITUTION AND VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS. VAN DER STOEL TOLD HIM THAT NETHERLANDS WOULD NOT INTERFERE IN CZECHOSLOVAK INTERNAL AFFAIRS, BUT WANTS TO SEE THE FINAL ACT FULLY APPLIED.

5. IN A SUBSEQUENT CZECH TV INTERVIEW AT THE HOTEL, THE

CZECHOSLOVAK INTERVIEWER ANNOYED VAN DER STOEL BY ASSERTING THAT HIS BEHAVIOUR HAD NOT BEEN GOOD IN AGREEING TO MEET PATOCKA DURING HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO PRAGUE. VAN DER STOEL REFUSED EVEN TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THE TV REP, SAYING HE WOULD ONLY COMMENT ON SUCH QUESTIONS IN HIS MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK.

6. LATER, AFTER VISITING AN AIRCRAFT PLANT, VAN DER STOEL SAY CH OUPEK AT NETHERLANDS EMBASSY RECEPTION AND TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH PATOCKA. CHNOUPEK SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE MEETING AND CONSIDERED IT HIGHLY "IMPROPER" AND "UNUSUAL" -- "WE ARE SHOCKED," HE ADDED. VAN DER STOEL DID NOT SEE CHNOUPEK AGAIN UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE. DEPUTY FONMIN SPACIL TOOK THE SAME LINE AT OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY DEP FONMIN VEJVODA FOR VAN DER STOEL. HE CHALLENGED VAN DER STOEL TO GO ON TV AND SAY NETHERLANDS WOULD NOT INTERFERE IN CSSR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. VAN DER STOEL READILY
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AGREED, PROVIDED HE COULD ALSO SAY THAT HIS COUNTRY WANTS FINAL ACT -- INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS -- FULLY

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IMPLEMENTED AND PROVIDED THAT PATOCKA WOULD NOT SUFFER "BODILY HARM".

7. SHORTLY BEFORE GOING TO THAT DINNER VAN DER STOEL HAD
LEARNED THAT TWO OTHER PROMINENT CHARTER 77 ACTIVISTS,
KRIEGEL AND MLYMAR, WERE AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL
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HOPING TO SPRING ANOTHER SURPRISE MEETING ON HIM. HE
DECIDED TO AVOID THIS AND WENT STRAIGHT TO DINNER PARTY.

8. ON LAST DAY OF VISIT, VAN DER STOEL FOUND HIMSELF ON
SIGHTSEEING TOUR INSTEAD OF PAYING COURTESY CALLS ON
PRESIDENT HUSAK AND ACTING PRIME MINISTER (STROUGAL WAS
ILL). BEFORE DRIVING TO AIRPORT, CHNOUPEK MET VAN DER STOEL
AT HOTEL AND SAID HUSAK REFUSED TO RECEIVE THE DUTCH FOREIGN
MINISTER BECAUSE OF HIS MEETING WITH PATOCKA. VAN DER STOEL TOLD
CHNOUPEK THAT IT WOULD BE ASTONISHING TO THE NETHERLANDS GOVT
THAT A STANDARD COURTESY CALL HAD BEEN CANCELLED SIMPLY BECAUSE
OF A MEETING WITH A MAN GUILTY ONLY OF SEEKING THAT HUMAN RIGHTS
BE OBSERVED. VAN DER STOEL SAID HE WOULD NOT, HOW-
EVER, "ATTACH DIPLOMATIC CONSEQUENCES" TO THIS ACT.

9. IN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS, CHNOUPEK TOOK LINE THAT
CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAS LITTLE ROOM TO MANEUVER ON HUMAN
RIGHTS--PRESSED TOO HARD BY THE WEST, HE SAID, "WE
MAY BE PUSHED BACK TO THE SITUATION IN THE 1950'S."

10. TO PUT A FINAL TOUCH ON THE ATMOSPHERE OF
THIS VISIT, A CZECH TV COMMENTATOR TOLD VAN DER
STOEL IN AN AIRPORT INTERVIEW THAT IN TALKING WITH
PATOCKA HE HAD BEEN DEALING WITH A FASCIST. VAN DER
STOEL REPLIED THAT THE COMMENTATOR WAS MAKING A
SERIOUS CHARGE, WHICH PATOCKA SHOULD HAVE A CHANCE
TO ANSWER IN PUBLIC IN ORDER TO DEFEND HIMSELF. AFTER
THE AIRPORT DEPARTURE CEREMONY, CHNOUPEK TOLD DUTCH

AMBASSADOR ON WAY INTO TOWN THAT HE HAD NOT AUTHORIZED THE TV INTERVIEW AT THE AIRPORT BUT THAT IT WAS TRUE THAT PATOCKA WAS A FASCIST. NEEDLESS TO SAY, VAN DER STOEL'S MEETING WITH PATOCKA AND HIS STATEMENTS SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE NOT BEEN REPORTED IN THE LOCAL MEDIA.

11. THROUGHOUT THE VISIT, DUTCH JOURNALISTS WERE A CONFIDENTIAL

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PROBLEM FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES. ONE REPORTER WAS APPREHENDED AND DETAINED FOR FOUR HOURS AFTER HE HAD MET WITH CHARTER SPOKESMAN JIRI HAJEK.

12. THE VERY BRIEF JOINT STATEMENT AT THE END OF THE VISIT SPOKE OF A "FRANK AND BUSINESSLIKE ATMOSPHERE". IT NOTED THAT FONMINS HAD DISCUSSED "FURTHER DEEPENING OF THE PROCESS OF DETENTE" AND FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL PRINCIPLES AND PROVISIONS OF THE FINAL ACT. OTHER TOPICS LISTED AS DISCUSSED WERE: DISARMAMENT, MBFR, THE NEAR EAST, CYPRUS, SOUTHERN AFRICA AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS.
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